

The Wormwood Review

Volume 12, number 4 (issue forty-eight). Editor: Marvin Malone; art editor: A. Sypher. Copyright © 1972, The Wormwood Review Press. Editorial and subscription address: P.O. Box 8840, Stockton, California 95204 U.S.A.

....

THE CAR PREACHER'S SON
TALKING AT A ROTARY CLUB LUNCHEON MEETING
AT
TWELVE O' CLOCK NOON
IN
THE VIKING ROOM
OF
MASON'S RESTURANT

When my father died, I didn't
attend the funeral (what's the use
dead'en buried ... world's here for the
living); anyway, I was busy hanging

plastic pennants that day (sound real
good flapping in the breeze) -- hot orange,
yellow & blue ones between them clear
glass 75 CON Edison Watt bulbs

strung like a pearl necklace over the line
of used cars on the old gravel corner lot
there on 12th Avenue. Anyway, Saturday
night was the best time to sell cars --

warm summer Saturday nights especially;
that's when the hicks came to town
and walked the polished rows, hunting
for a good deal:

kicking tires,
opening hoods,
testing springs,
& looking up the exhaust pipe

like it was some whore's twot.
Always asking What's the horsepower?
or What'll she do on a flat stretch?
between spits of tobacco.

(Listen, there's no such thing as
sales resistance.
Why, if a man believes in hisself,
he can sell anything to anybody.)

And oh god I could sell 'em
in those days! I could sell.
I could sell to the dead
if I damn-well pleased.

Then one day my mother up
and died too,
and I got the whole business:
lock, stock and

barrel at the time
I was really selling
them '56 chevy convertibles
like hotcakes

right off the proverbial griddle.
(You know, I can still remember
the names of every customer that ever
bought a new or used car

off my 1550 12th Avenue lot.)
But it was a vicious business
if you want to hear the godawful
truth. It was dog eat dog in those

days. Why, I was the only one who knew
how to get the pecker tracks
off the back seats
of the trade-ins from the teenagers.

Not that that was such a great feat,
but it's the constant attention
to the little details
that makes for a great sales record.

Actually, it was all ... well,
just some sort of miracle.
I mean how my sales pitch
alone would cure

loud tappets
cancerous rocker seals
chrome acne
rusted floor boards including --

if you'll pardon the fancy language --
all the other evils that were always
attacking the most beautiful thing
on wheels: THE AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE.

And oh yes how my con-
versation would tickle
the little wife's fancy
(if you know what I mean).

Even my jokes were told
a thousand times over
by the old man
when he got back home.

But oh god I want you
to know that I could sell.
I could sell to the dead ...
if there was no one else.

Say, speaking of selling,
anyone here want a ride around
the block
in my new demonstration model?

Well, don't everyone shout at once.

STOPPING OFF FOR A DRINK

she clutches me
says
what's this a poem

my flesh engorges
in her warm
hands
yes

-- James P. Bixler

San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico